

SOCIETY IN FANCY DRESS FORTY YEARS AGO

Rare Collection of Photographs of Social Celebrities Who Attended Elaborate Ball in 1875—Affair Was the Sensational Event of the Time

IN the spring of 1875, two score years ago, there was given in New York a fancy dress ball which occupies a place of peculiar importance in the social history of the city. The Sun is permitted to reproduce a rare collection of photographs of some of those who took part in it. Doubtless these pictures will be to many of greater interest than the historical aspect of the ball. In those faraway days every one did not have his history recorded photographically from the time of his birth on. Therefore photographs such as these are unusual. In them social leaders of to-day are seen as they looked when debutantes. In them also are seen social leaders who have passed away after the enjoyment of all the honors society can confer.

Historically it is important because it was one of the last notable entertainments of the era then closing. New York was very different then from what it is to-day. The social centre was far downtown. The scene of the dance was Delmonico's, at Fifth avenue and Fourteenth street. It was a period of the rapid multiplication of large fortunes. With increased wealth came increased expenditures in living and entertaining. Society was adopting more

and more the customs and formalities of Europe, with the result that its pleasures were enjoyed on a more elaborate scale. The result was a growing magnificence which had its first, most striking manifestation some eight years later at the famous Vanderbilt ball.

Yet the change was more on the surface than in the makeup of society itself. It was an evolution, not a revolution. There was no change of dynasty. The old social leaders were not displaced; rather they gathered more power. The names attached to the pictures are as familiar in social annals to-day as they were then. Society itself worked out the evolution. Indeed, to one of the young ladies at the subscription dance of 1875, destined afterward to have a notable social career on two continents, is given much of the credit for devising the splendors and bringing about the tremendous success of the Vanderbilt ball.

So this subscription dance of the spring of 1875 marked an epoch in its way. And aside from their importance as human documents, from their social interest, these photographs are worth studying, if only from their revelations of the feminine fashions of forty years ago.



MRS. H. LEVITT
(Nee Gandy)



MISS
CONSUELO
YZNAGA
Afterward
Dowager Duchess
of Manchester



MRS.
LIVINGSTON



MISS KERNOCHAN



MISS ELSIE BARLOW
Sister of Judge Barlow, afterward Mrs. Stephen H. Olin



MISS
AMY
TOWNSEND



MISS MINNIE STEVENS
(Lady Arthur Paget)



MISS OELRICHS
(Mrs. William Jay)



MISS WHITNEY



MISS ASTOR



MISS RUTHERFORD